The Nation

FOUNDED 1865

Vol. CXXXIV NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22, 1932 No. 3494

Contents

EDITORIAL PARAGRAPHS 691
EDITORIALS:
"Christless Culture" 693
The Budget Has Its Face Lifted 694
The German Republic Totters 695
PIONEERS AMONG THE SOVIETS. By Harry F. Ward 696
THE MORONIC CONVENTIONS. By Paul Y. Anderson 697
THE FUTURE OF THE RAILROADS. By Winthrop M. Daniels .. 699
IN THE DRIFTWAY. By the Drifter 702
CORRESPONDENCE 702
CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE 704
FINANCE: A RIFT IN THE CLOUDS. By S. Palmer Harman 704
BOOKS, DRAMA, FILMS:
Potential Christ. By Emanuel Eisenberg 705
2033—or 1933? By James Truslow Adams 705
Bullfights and Goya. By Alice Beal Parsons 705
An American Reformer. By Oswald Garrison Villard 706
Shorter Notices 707
Drama: A Booby Prize and Some Others. By Joseph Wood Krutch 707
Films: Hollywood Tries "Ideas." By Alexander Bakshy 708

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Subscription Rates: Five dollars per annum postpaid in the United States; to Canada, $6.50; and to other foreign countries, $6.00.

THE NATION, No. 20 Vesey Street, New York City, Cable Address: Nation, New York. British Agent of Subscriptions and Advertising, Miss Gertrude M. Cross, 23 Brunswick Square, London W. C. 1, England.

AS WE GO TO PRESS it appears that there is to be a good, above-board fight in the Republican National Convention for a clear-cut, straightforward, and honest plank calling for repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. Nicholas Murray Butler has arrived in Chicago with his fighting clothes on, refusing to permit himself to be muzzled and announcing that he will offer his plank for repeal from the floor of the convention. More than that, the National Committee went contrary to the President's wishes and seated the old-line Negro delegations from the South instead of the contesting hand-picked Hoover delegations, thus upsetting the President's Southern patronage policy; and there was also evidence of a rising revolt against the renomination of the ridiculous Charles Curtis as Vice-President at Mr. Hoover's behest. If this revolt is carried through, we shall see one of the most interesting conventions in years, and Mr. Hoover will be put to his trumps. If he disavows the wet plank, his party courts defeat. If he accepts it, he stands convicted of gross hypocrisy. Certainly it is impossible to think of men like Nicholas Murray Butler, Senator Bingham, and all the long list of Republican wets campaigning on the same platform with Mr. Hoover if he repudiates the plank in which they are chiefly interested. It may be quite true, as William Allen White writes in the New York *Times,* that the prohibition issue is only a red herring to draw attention away from the real issues at stake, but the fact is that there is a public uprising against the Eighteenth Amendment which is not to be denied. Let us thank heaven there is an issue that some Americans will get excited about.

THE SCRIPPS-HOWARD NEWSPAPERS, twenty-five in number, have now officially flung Herbert Hoover, whom they supported four years ago, overboard, and have come out for Alfred E. Smith—not Newton D. Baker, their attorney, whom they have steadily been boosting in their columns, but our old friend Al. More than that, they have gone out of their way to give Governor Roosevelt one of the most humiliating slaps which could be administered to a public man, and in these words: "It is with regret we say that in Franklin Roosevelt we have another Hoover." Then the editorial continues: "In our solemn judgment the election of either Hoover or Roosevelt in November next would be a blow from which this nation would not recover in a generation. We have had about as much as we can stand of government by doubt. The times call for courage and action. We have those qualities in Smith. There are other men in the Democratic Party who possess them. Judging by performance Roosevelt does not." This is certainly killing two birds with one stone, though we most respectfully dissent from the Scripps-Howard belief that Al Smith is today available or desirable. Incidentally, the day after their first anti-Hoover editorial the Scripps-Howard dailies printed a second. It is so delightfully frank and honest that we reprint it in full: "The Scripps-Howard declaration for Smith as against Roosevelt has brought from many sources this question: 'If you think so much of Smith today, why didn't you support him against Hoover in 1928?' The answer is, we wish we had."

THE SPECTACLE OF THE BONUS ARMY encamped at Washington has its humorous side. When the Chief of Police politely offered the men trucks to depart in, the veterans as politely announced that they would stay where they were. Father Cox of Pittsburgh was there to inspire them; rumors that the whole march had been instigated by the "reds"—their exact status was vague—have disturbed the city officials and many of the veterans themselves. In the meantime, the army remains, in a camp whose conditions are described as "frightful" by Washington health authorities. Epidemics threaten as well as hunger. The veterans declare, nevertheless, that they will not go home until the bonus is paid. Mr. Hoover has been firmly set against direct federal relief to the hungry. If a large group of American citizens, who see relief administered by the federal government to starving banks and suffering railroads, take it into their heads to march in a body to the seat of government and ask help for themselves to which they believe they are entitled, who is to blame? Who will be to blame if, as "Commander" Waters of the "Bonus Expeditionary Forces" promises, the eight or ten thousand men now in Washington grow to 150,000 in the next two weeks? Mr. Hoover, of course, will be busy being renominated for the Presidency. But it is hard to believe that his complacent faith in rugged individualism will not be ruffled somewhat by the thought of the thousands seeking aid at the national capital, representing not only the war veterans but the army of American unemployed.

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THE MOVEMENT TO REPEAL the Eighteenth Amendment has gained remarkable momentum in the last few weeks. It is even sweeping the South, the section the prohibitionists had been depending upon for their last-ditch support against reamendment of the Constitution. In North Carolina an uncompromising wet, Robert R. Reynolds, ran far ahead of Senator Cameron Morrison, driest of the drys, in the preliminary Senatorial primary. In the Congressional primaries in Florida the daughter of William Jennings Bryan, Mrs. Ruth Bryan Owen, a dry who favors a referendum, was eliminated by Mark Wilcox, who favors outright repeal. Turning to the Middle West, the Republicans of Indiana have declared for resubmission of the Eighteenth Amendment to the people and for direct repeal of the Wright Act, the most stringent State enforcement law in the country. But the greatest impetus was given to the repeal drive by the declaration of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., long an ardent and sincere prohibitionist and himself a teetotaler. His statement that the prohibition experiment had failed was quickly followed by other statements from drys like Dr. John R. Mott, William Gibbs McAdoo, and Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., urging that the question be submitted to the people. Now that the repeal movement has gained such strength it is extremely important to keep in mind the necessity for obtaining a direct and genuine referendum. This, as we pointed out in *The Nation* of May 4, can only be had by submitting a repeal amendment not to the State legislatures, but to "conventions specially elected for the purpose of passing upon this question and upon no other."

"POOR OLD JOHN BROWN, God sanctify his death to our good, and give us a little of his courage, piety, and self-sacrificing spirit, with more brains!"—thus wrote George Hoadly of the Harper's Ferry raider. Something like this might also be written of Senator Smith W. Brookhart, just defeated in Iowa for reelection to the United States Senate. Not that Senator Brookhart is dead—far from it. He will fight on. But for the present he is retired by Henry Field, whose victory is admittedly due in large part to his voice coming over the ether from his own radio station thus: "Hello, folks, here's Henry"—to be followed by intimate details of the life led by himself, his wife, their eleven children and grandchildren. Whether he was nominated because of what he has said and taught or as a result of the desire of the Iowa public to get him off the air, we leave to the historians. He did, however, score effectively in his criticism of the Brookhart nepotism, thanks to which several of the Senator's family are on the government pay roll. Mr. Brookhart has often played a useful role. His heart is warm, his instincts are sound, his courage is admirable. His many errors, on the other hand, have been due to lack of taste, of knowledge and training, especially in economics. Like so many other politicians he has been unable to see our American situation from the point of view of the rest of the world. His good qualities and his desire for reform will be missed in the next Senate, even if he could not discover the fundamentals of our needs.

THE ARMY AND NAVY LOBBY has once more clearly demonstrated its power in Congress. It has defeated all efforts to cut the army and navy budgets drastically, and it has preserved the army and navy officers from any salary reductions, although many other branches of the government have not been spared, not even the diplomatic service and the State Department. More than that, the army and navy propaganda goes on unceasingly, and press and radio lend themselves freely. Thus, Secretary Hurley is making impassioned pleas for more armaments and prefacing them with the false assertion that we are about disarmed now. Even the depression is being used to bolster the army on the ground that it will be needed to keep the peace and maintain order next winter. A number of frightened Congressmen so expressed themselves in the debate—only to see to it that their remarks were carefully cut out of the printed reports in the *Record*. Congress is conniving at the building up of a sacrosanct group of officials and is fostering a spirit of American militarism which daily shows greater and greater resemblance to the despised pre-war Berlin brand.

MR. SEABURY'S LETTER to Governor Roosevelt, in which he discussed the case of Mayor Walker and presented documents to fortify his argument, was extremely impressive. It is a little hard to see why, judging from the tone of Mr. Roosevelt's acknowledgment of it, it should have aroused annoyance in the gubernatorial breast. It is reported that the Governor was not pleased because Mr. Seabury gave the material out to the press at the same time that he sent it to Albany; but one remembers that the memorandum on Sheriff Farley, sent privately to Mr. Roosevelt, was not made public for twelve days. Perhaps Mr. Seabury had his own reasons for desiring prompt publicity; perhaps it would have been vastly more convenient if there had been no pressure on Mr. Roosevelt to act before the coming Democratic convention. The whole matter is so tied up with political ambitions that it is very hard to keep clearly in mind what is really at stake. The issue, in the last analysis, is whether or not the people of the largest city in the United States are to enjoy good government or not. Mr. Walker himself is only an episode in that question. If he is removed, Tammany Hall will still reign triumphant. It will continue to reign until the citizens of New York decide they have had enough of it. Publication of the conduct of city affairs under Tammany rule will help; the removal of city officials for nonfeasance or malfeasance of duty will help. But only the voters can finally and firmly put the quietus on the Tiger. So far they have shown small inclination to do so.

EUROPEAN STATESMEN seem paralyzed in the face of the continued economic decline. Even the gravity of the reparations problem has not served to arouse them from their inaction. They have had six months in which to prepare for the Lausanne Conference. In that period they have done precisely nothing. A recent news dispatch from London quoted a government spokesman as emphatically denying the report that the British government intended "to take a bold stand at Lausanne." Premier MacDonald and M. Herriot, it is announced on the eve of their departure for Lausanne, think alike, "however they must act." They both desire a "just solution." A month ago it appeared that the French would be much more lenient toward Germany in the matter of reparations than they would have been last winter, but recent statements of Premier Herriot now suggest that French opposition to cancelation or drastic reduc-

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tion is stiffening. Herriot has veered around because our own State Department has again and quite needlessly gone out of its way to inform the European Powers that they must not cancel reparations on the supposition that the United States would thereupon agree to drop the war debts. The French Premier has since indicated that without some advance assurance that his country will be relieved of its war debts he will have to insist upon continued reparations payments.

ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS BILLS ever to come before Congress has been passed by the House of Representatives without a record vote. This is the Fish-Dies bill providing for the deportation of alien Communists residing here and for the exclusion of others who may want to come to this country. The immigration laws are already broad enough to permit the exclusion or deportation of aliens who advocate overthrow of the government by violence, and surely the Department of Labor has not hesitated indiscriminately and arbitrarily to use these laws for that purpose. But the new measure goes much farther. It so redefines communism as to embrace almost every alien who advocates the establishment in this or any other country of a new social order based upon equality or common ownership of property. At the same time the bill by inference would admit to this country persons advocating the violent overthrow of Socialist or working-class governments. This is class legislation clearly designed to protect the capitalist system and the capitalist class. It is the first concrete step toward that fascist dictatorship for which many of our bankers, industrialists, and politicians are longing. If the Fish-Dies measure is allowed to become law, it is certain to be followed by more repressive legislation directed not alone against alien residents, but against native and naturalized citizens who may wish to change the existing order. The Communists have failed to stir up class conflict. Proponents of the Fish-Dies bill are likely to succeed where the Communists have failed.

THE LATE Dr. William W. Keen had a rare personality and tremendous ability. Hence he was bound to make his way in any walk of life. His was an open mind toward new developments in his own profession, which is a rare attribute in any profession—especially among the medicos, we should be tempted to say, if we did not know so many editors. A distinguished surgeon, Dr. Keen will perhaps be best remembered for his operation for sarcoma of the jaw on President Cleveland on July 1, 1893, on Mr. E. C. Benedict's yacht Oneida as it steamed through Hell Gate. This was so concealed that, incredible as it seems, not a reporter suspected, and nothing leaked out about it for twenty-four years, when Dr. Keen published the details. But Dr. Keen deserves far greater fame for his distinguished teaching in three colleges, his early championship, against tremendous opposition, of antiseptic surgery in this country after the Lister discoveries, and his own important labors in insisting upon the use of paratyphoid inoculation in our armies. In addition to this he wielded an admirable pen which interested laymen as well as the medical profession. His ninety-five years, full of genuine service to humanity, are remarkable in themselves and because they more than span the triumphant rise of modern surgery.

"Christless Culture"

"PAGANISM scored by Presbyterians. Christless culture is blamed by assembly for present conditions of the world." Thus run the headlines to a news story of the meeting of the Presbyterian General Council at Denver; and from the account which follows, it is evident that a glorious time was had by all. Stuffy clerics from all parts of the United States went on a moralistic rampage and put on a show which in its general self-righteous irrelevance reminds one of nothing so much as a political rally staged by the contented members of the G. O. P.

What had best be called the key-note speech was delivered by one Rev. Dr. William Chambers Covert of Philadelphia, and this gentleman appears to have had the best time of all. In an address which seems to have been one continuous peroration he blamed the present condition of the world on our "Christless culture," denounced the products of our schools as "educated ruffians," and wound up with a lamentation concerning "Christless men of letters, Christless professors and philosophers, Christless leaders in business, and Christless politicians."

So far, perhaps, so good. But what, after listening to this harangue, were the specific proposals which the combined wisdom of the assembly could excogitate and present to a suffering world? They may be summarized as follows: It passed a resolution requesting that "the better magazines" refuse tobacco advertisements; it denounced motion pictures "in general"; it advocated a federal censorship; it condemned the use of radio on Sunday; it denounced all advocates of prohibition repeal as "the most infamous conspirators who attack the Constitution"; and it concluded by supporting "with no wavering loyalty the army and navy as organizations to be used only in self-defense."

Now it seems strange that anyone who contemplated this as a sample of what the best Christian minds could produce should wonder why it is that intelligent people everywhere do not protest against the dominance of a "Christless culture." But if the leaders of the Presbyterian General Assembly still find it strange that those who are interested in human happiness and social well-being have lost faith in organized Christianity, we should like to suggest that they contemplate the history of modern Europe and ask themselves at what moment the church took the lead in any serious effort to establish a more equitable society. This age is "Christless" and it has got itself into a mess. But before we could be convinced that the "Christlessness" produced the mess we should have to be shown that the "ages of faith" were characterized by the rule of justice and mercy.

After all, the church has had nearly twenty centuries to show what it could do. During the greater part of that time nine out of ten of all persons in authority professed, at least, to accept its guidance, and the world, whatever else may have been wrong with it, had clerics in charge of education and church members in the seats of councils and parliaments. We wonder at the folly of those who propose to reelect Mr. Hoover as President of the United States. But Mr. Hoover, after all, has had only four years to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of his leadership. The church has had two thousand.

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The Budget Has Its Face Lifted

IF one had taken at their face value the panicky statements of many editorial writers, Congressmen, and the President himself in his theatrical address before Congress, one would have supposed, just prior to the passage of the new tax law, that the government was going to be obliged to support itself by paper money within a few weeks if Congress did not act within a few days. Yet the national debt, it is well to remind ourselves, is still $7,000,000,000 below the level it reached in 1919, and when the Secretary of the Treasury this month offered $750,000,000 of Treasury certificates, approximately one-half consisting of three-year notes bearing 3 per cent and one-half of one-year notes bearing 1½ per cent, the issue was nearly four times oversubscribed. The government's credit is plainly not in immediate jeopardy.

The anxiety and hysteria that developed in the Congressional debates whenever it was discovered that the new tax rates failed to "balance" the budget by $100,000,000 or $200,000,000, and the implication that finding revenues to cover this shortage meant the difference between ruin and salvation, betrayed a particularly absurd sense of proportion when it is recalled that the budget deficit in the 1931 fiscal year amounted to $900,000,000 and that the deficit for the present fiscal year to date amounts to the stupendous sum of $2,700,000,000. An added touch of absurdity was given by the questionableness of Secretary Mills's estimates of tax yields, which the Baltimore *Sun,* as the result of a rather careful investigation, has estimated to be over-optimistic to the extent of about $700,000,000.

Let us attempt to look at the question with some sort of rational perspective. It is, of course, imperative that over a reasonable period the budget be balanced, but as Professor Seligman pointed out in a recent article in *The Nation,* there is nothing sacrosanct about any particular twelve months. Mr. Hoover has done everything possible to make it appear that Congress would never have "balanced" the budget had he not acted with such promptness and decision. This pretense is particularly ludicrous in the light of the record. When the great Republican prosperity began to crack in 1929, Mr. Hoover refused to acknowledge that anything of importance had happened. At the end of the 1931 fiscal year, when the deficit of $900,000,000 was recorded, he still did not act. He still believed that a revival of prosperity was just sixty days ahead. He was still unwilling to accept the unpopularity which he believed an increase of taxes would bring to his Administration. He urged "economy," but said nothing about taxes. It was not until last December, when even the official budget estimates forecast a deficit of more than $2,000,000,000 in the current fiscal year, that the President brought himself reluctantly to recommend that taxes be increased. As a result of the former short-sighted attitude at least a year had been lost. It is obvious that if the tax rates now adopted by Congress had been adopted a year ago, the federal government would have been more than a billion dollars better off than it now is. To put the matter another way, if tax rates had been increased a year ago, we should not have had to resort to so Spartan a tax measure as we have now. Our burdens have only been increased by delay.

One final remark must be made on the question of the budget balance. The great bulk of the comment both in the Congressional debates and in the daily press implied that the essential thing was to make income equal expenditures, and that it was a matter of indifference whether the budget was balanced upward or downward. The real need, of course, was for a budget balanced downward. What we actually have is a budget balanced upward. For it is not an increase in expenditures that has caused the present deficit, but a falling away of revenues, and revenues have been drying up because of the fall in the volume of business and employment and the fall in world price levels. In the light of such a situation, it does not create real confidence to balance the budget by imposing on the taxpayers of the United States the greatest tax burden they have had to bear in peace times. Confidence can be created mainly by the assurance that the proportional burden of the government will be no greater or very little greater as a result of a fall in world price levels than it was before. The complete timidity of Congress in agreeing to any but the most niggling economies does not give this assurance.

Perhaps the pressure on Congress for economies, however, will become formidable when the taxpayer begins to realize in the next few weeks that he is really being taxed. He will not be spared that keen realization. He will feel it with every stamp he buys for every letter he writes; he will feel it every time he makes out a check, every time he stops for gasoline, nearly every time he goes to the movies; he will see it on the monthly telephone bills and electric bills; he will pay it when he trades in stocks or bonds, when he buys automobiles, tires, jewelry, radios, phonographs, mechanical refrigerators, firearms, cameras, candy, chewing gum, soft drinks, toothpaste; his heirs will feel it when he dies; and he will get his hardest blow on March 15. If he is a married man with no dependents he will pay $20 on a $3,000 income, where before he paid nothing; $60 on a $4,000 income, where before he paid $6; $100 on a $5,000 income, where before he paid $17; $480 on a $10,000 income, where before he paid $101; and if his income is in the highest brackets he will have to let the government take more than half of it.

Yet considering the difficulties Congress was under, considering the requirement laid upon it to raise in the worst year of perhaps the greatest depression of modern times more than one billion dollars additional in revenue, it is to be congratulated upon having produced, on the whole, a bill so generally sound and courageous. It set its face against a general sales tax, in spite of the greatest pressure from active lobbyists, from one of its own committees, and finally from the Administration. It raised the income tax and the inheritance tax boldly, and it showed excellent sense, with a few exceptions, in the articles it chose for special excises. If it could only attack the expenditures of the Veterans' Bureau, and of the army and navy, as courageously as it attacked the question of revenue!

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The German Republic Totters

THAT the German Republic is in jeopardy must be obvious to everybody. The sudden return of Paul von Hindenburg to his war-time mentality has resulted in the establishment of a reactionary regime composed of aristocrats, big business men, and militarists—the worst possible combination—which menaces at every point the maintenance of republican institutions. More than that, the proclamation of new elections for the Reichstag on July 31 will result in the taking over of the government by the Hitler forces unless all signs fail. They will have no difficulty in getting on with those in charge of the present reactionary rule, who are now trying to obtain control of Prussia by having the Reich take over its government. Whether this will precipitate a conflict with the trade unions and the Communists time will show. The heads of the state governments have already protested. The *Vorwärts* has been quick to declare that the final struggle is at hand between the reactionary forces and those who believe in the revolution of 1918. At any rate, until this question is settled there must be great anxiety and an intensified internal conflict which bodes ill for the peace of Germany and the economic rehabilitation of the world. From every point of view there is nothing more important today than the question whether the German Republic will live or yield to a dictatorship.

Why is it that the Republic is so threatened fourteen years after its founding? Some say this is another failure of democracy. Others insist that the Germans are merely throwing off a blind set up to make the world think that their character had changed, and that they are now returning to their old role and revealing the same inherent imperialistic tendencies which were heralded to the world as so dangerous to it in the war years. Does it mean that the bulk of the German people, nurtured under the monarchy, naturally favor autocratic government with centralized control? Or is the sudden collapse of the government into the hands of the old gang due to economic conditions rather than to political desires or to inbred tendencies? To our minds this event is the natural outcome of the Treaty of Versailles and the treatment given to the Germans ever since their defeat in 1918. It has been repeatedly pointed out in these columns that if the United States and the Allies had deliberately planned their course to make the existence of the German Republic as difficult as possible, they could hardly have done otherwise than they did. At home, on the other hand, the new German state has had to face the anti-republican elements, while year after year the industrial and economic situation of the Reich got worse and worse, so that today, as Chancellor Brüning has just testified, one-half of the workshops of Germany are closed and 6,000,000 German workers are without means of livelihood. Any form of government which had to face these facts after fourteen years would find it hard indeed to hold its own.

We do not believe that this is a failure of democracy, or that it means that Germany is inherently monarchistic or imperialistic, although there are, of course, many devoted monarchists and militarists. Certainly the workers are overwhelmingly pro-Republic and utterly opposed to any form of dictatorship, whether from the left or the right. What has happened is that the bulk of the German people must now pay for the failure of the Socialist governments of the past to rise to their opportunities immediately after the war—their failure to reorganize, their failure to make the revolution as thoroughgoing as it should have been. This, coupled with the economic distress, has so exhausted the popular forces that the reactionaries, thanks to Von Hindenburg, had only to sit still and let the plums drop into their laps. It was the workingmen of Germany, and not the middle classes, who defeated the Kapp Putsch in 1920. The question now to be answered is whether the trade unions, worn down by suffering and unemployment, by lack of adequate food and adequate earnings, have still left within them the power and unity to repel this attempt to overthrow the Republic.

Looking back, it is plain that the revolution did not go far enough in 1918. It was not radical enough. Not a day should have been lost in breaking up the great estates, in smashing the power of the great East Prussian agrarians who for so long have been the real rulers of Germany, as the big business men of America have so long ruled this country. Precisely as was the case in England when the British Labor Party came into power, the German Socialists were weak in not immediately proceeding to socialize certain of the leading industries, thereby breaking the strangle-hold of the great industrialists. When the Reich collapsed, the German leaders appointed committees to report which branches of industry could be considered ready for socialization. The committees reported on coal, potash, and electrical production, and drafted a general socialization law. A second commission, appointed in 1920, reported a weak dilution of the original plan, and with this ended all efforts toward direct programmatic socialization. Thus the opportunity was lost to take control of key industries.

Finally, it remains to point out that the government was repeatedly weak in dealing with such menacing manifestations as the "private armies"—the Steel Helmets, the Hitler shock troops, and similar bodies, although it did some years ago dissolve the Communist "Red Front" organization. Certainly no government ever paid a higher price for an error of judgment than has the German Government for its failure to expel Hitler after he raised the banner of revolt in Munich with General Ludendorff, and was caught red-handed. It is an open question, also, whether the government has not been weak in permitting the members of the Hohenzollern family to remain on German soil. But even in judging the government for these shortcomings one must never lose sight of what has been going on in Germany during these crucial years: the economic distress; the sense of infinite wrong done to Germany by the Treaty of Versailles; the false accusation of sole responsibility for the war; the Ruhr invasion; the frightful loss of wealth due both to the war and to the inflation, and many other factors. All these incidents, plus the weakness of the government, the failure to carry the revolution through with vigor, and the survival of many militarists and monarchists, are today the reasons why the German Republic totters.

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Pioneers Among the Soviets

By HARRY F. WARD

Moscow, May 25

SCATTERED here and there through the fertile sections of central Russia and the Ukraine are a few agricultural communes. The total of their production is slight beside that of the enormous state farms, and so they receive but slight mention now in government reports and discussions. Also, since the popular drift in the villages toward collectivization makes it expedient to concentrate every effort on making the *Kolhoz* form of organization universal as rapidly as possible, writers on the peasant problem merely mention the commune in passing as the most advanced form of Socialist agricultural organization, in which all productive livestock as well as land and labor is held and administered in common and in which there is communal eating. It stands far removed from the simplest form of collective farming, which is merely an agreement to join land and pool labor for the production of the crop. But whereas this simple type grows into the *Kolhoz* with its cooperative holding and administration of land, productive animals, and machinery, and therefore rapidly disappears, the commune remains to challenge the *Kolhoz*—whose organization it has inspired and led—to take further steps. Also it is an admirable example of that combination of personal and small-group initiative with governmental direction and expansion which is characteristic of Soviet administration, instead of that rigid overhead control which is abstractly assumed to be inevitable in Socialist economy.

So far as I can discover, these communes were all started by people who came from outside the borders of the Soviet Union or from beyond the seas. While the government was finding the key to the solution of the peasant problem in big-scale mechanized agriculture on state farms, these outsiders were pioneering in the discovery of methods of local organization for farmers who did not want to be wage workers and for kinds of farming that could not be best done that way. In the black-soil belt are several communes which were organized in the United States. Their founders were in part Russians who came back bringing gifts to their mother country, and in part workers of other European nationalities. All their savings—running from $500 to $1,000 and in one case $3,500—they put in for capital. Some were Communists, some were Socialists. All had the vision of the ideal rural community and all had the heritage of the communal village living of Europe. The young proletarian writers, set to push along the collectivization that is everywhere destroying the foundations of capitalism in the villages, find their characters and stories in the *Kolhoz*. But the communars are still the pioneers, and will be for a long time to come. It is in terms of their type of organization and life that the younger administrators at *Kolhoz* headquarters talk when they are picturing tomorrow in the countryside.

I have lived long enough in one of these American-Russian communes and talked sufficiently with men from the others to believe that they went through a common experience. Given land by the government and usually some partially destroyed buildings of an old estate, they endured a first winter something like that experienced by our first colonists. Used to the plenty of American kitchens, they had only coarse staples to eat and were not able properly to house the livestock and machinery they had brought with them. Now, with their truck gardens, orchards, and vineyards coming into bearing to relieve the heavy starch diet of central Russia, they can afford to smile at the first lean winters. But soon they were to find worse difficulties. There were two types of men among them—some who had a great purpose, others who thought only to better themselves. These were the first to shirk the common labor and the first to draw clothing from the common store. When wage labor was put in and then piece work with its agreed-upon norms, the shirkers, seeing they could no longer evade the common task, began to say that if they had to work as hard as in the States they preferred to go back there where life was easier. So they gradually weeded themselves out and were allowed to take with them whatever capital they had put into the common fund. For those who now remain it is agreed that the common capital, like the pooled land of the *Kolhoz,* is indivisible. In fact, the sense, like the reality, of a separate group ownership has practically disappeared, owing on the one hand to increasing government credits for buildings and the increase of herds, and on the other to the part which the communes have played and are playing in the whole agricultural program of the Soviets.

It is agreed in all these communes that each step in distributing the product according to quantity and quality of work done has resulted in an increase of productivity. The books are clear on that point. Now they say: "If we had known in the beginning the value of the principle of payment by results our way would have been easier." They have not abandoned the Communist principle "To each according to his needs," but they have been forced at present to administer it in such a way as to secure "from each according to his ability." Later on when, as they put it, people have been emancipated from the habits and psychology of capitalist society, they expect as a matter of course that all will render their maximum contribution to the common life, and then distribution can safely proceed on the basis of need alone. It is more likely, however, that a part of their pioneering, perhaps the principal part, lies in finding the true synthesis of results and needs for the governing of distribution.

So far the record runs parallel to that of the religious communities in the United States which came to seek a refuge in the New World; but here they part company. The American bodies have gradually been overcome by the capitalistic environment around them. They have accepted its ways and works and finally have tried to keep apart only by a routine of custom and mode of dress to which finally their young people have refused to conform. In the Soviet Union whatever concessions the communes have been compelled to make to a transitional period are also part and parcel of the general tactics of the government, which is determined to move in the direction in which they themselves started. Hence the whole social environment is with them,

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and they can not only hold their young people but train them for larger activities. "We were ahead of the government," say the old leaders, "but it moves our way."

The Lenin commune, about two-thirds of the way between Moscow and the Volga, is a good example of the blending of group initiative and governmental direction. Its founders had their tractors and were plowing and threshing for the peasants before the government developed tractor stations. They built up their herd of record milk-producing cows and fine swine from imported Yorkshire stock and have supplied breeding animals all around the district. Now that they have explored the agricultural possibilities, the authorities have decided that they are to specialize in producing milk, cheese, and pork, and in breeding stock for the *Kolhoz*. Already they have supplied a good quota of high-quality cheese for export. This year the government plan asked them for 200 hogs. Copying the *stretchny* plan of the industrial workers, which always goes farther than the official plan-makers, they decided to give 400. This meant that they ate meat themselves only every other day last winter.

Similarly they give their people for party and government work. Twenty-six of them were off on missions of one sort or another when I was there. Once a week, for her social work, each woman party member in turn tramps off to a neighboring village to lead some class or club. So they have evangelized the district until they have two other affiliated communes and have collectivized in whole or in part all the villages but one. This one they call "the dark village." When I asked them about the vital point in control —the fixing of the price at which they must sell their products to the government—they said they had a voice in the body that determined it and if it proved to be below the cost of production, when that was reduced to the lowest point compatible with proper living standards, they could always get it changed.

But it is of their cultural work and their children that they are most proud. "How do our children compare with those of the villages?" they want to know. Of course they have their nursery and kindergarten, and are now debating whether it is better for children to stay there night as well as day. Then they provide the quarters—with nurses, dispensary, and tiny hospital—for a government doctor and for an agronome, who also serve the villages. Likewise of course there are the school, the club with its movies and lectures, and the evening classes for workers.

For all that this will lead to in revolutionizing the life of the district, it is the women who pay the biggest price. Some of them, especially in the kitchens and dining-rooms, are working longer hours than the men. Like those who came first to New England and Virginia, and those who later crossed the prairies and mountains in covered wagons, they left comforts behind them when they came to Russia which sometimes must obtrude upon their memory. For them the externals of living are still rough and hard, but they say the bigness of the enterprise and the joy of common labor more than compensate. Still they would like to be able more often to buy a pair of stockings and to see more cloth upon the shelves of the cooperative. The city cooperatives now are getting the things that women like and need. In all fairness some of this stock should go at once to these agricultural centers, which are just as essential to the building of socialism as the heavy industries.

The Moronic Conventions

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, June 11

ABOUT the time this appears some eleven hundred unhappy men and women in the Chicago convention hall will be going through the drab and distasteful motions of renominating the most unpopular and discredited politician who has occupied the White House since Rutherford B. Hayes. None of them will enjoy it—at least none of the sober ones—and many will feel that it means the ruination of the Republican Party and possibly of the country. Yet such are the bonds of party tradition and Presidential patronage that they will go through with it, even as they hold their noses and pray secretly to God for forgiveness. A more depressing affair can hardly be imagined. The only important decision will have been made in advance; indeed, it has been made already, to the extent that Herbert Hoover ever decides anything. After a succession of comic developments which saw poor Dr. Harry Garfield, the official platform-maker, scurrying frantically and in the most undignified haste between the White House, the Congressional Country Club, and Senator Borah's office, Hapless Herbert has again decided to straddle on the prohibition issue. Assuming that he does not change his mind in the next few days (always a dangerous assumption), his straddling this time will take the form of assenting to a plank advocating "resubmission" of the Eighteenth Amendment. Apparently there will be no suggestion of a substitute plan for regulation or control, the Pericles of Palo Alto having explained pathetically that "no substitute would satisfy everybody," and so it is difficult to see how "resubmission" could mean anything except unconditioned repeal. Yet I venture the confident assertion that the candidate will emphatically disavow any such desire. It all amounts to the President saying to the voters: "If a majority of you are wet, I want to be wet; if the majority of you are dry, I'm dry." This is what, in the delectable language of Secretary Hyde, may be recognized as "the leadership of our great President, Herbert Hoover."

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AS usual, the Democrats will provide a more entertaining spectacle, if not a more edifying one. Governor Franklin Roosevelt seems definitely and finally committed to the strategy of capturing the nomination by the inspiring device of creeping up and sprinkling salt on its tail, while he in turn is stalked by a posse of masked hunters whose deep-mouthed hound answers to the name of Al but whose collar bears the initials of Raskob and Baruch. There is no doubt that Friendly Frank's furtive quest has made progress in

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recent weeks—owing largely to the obstinate and wooden-headed blundering of the supposedly great minds who oppose it. The revival of his popularity dates very definitely from the strangely halting, reactionary, and spiteful speeches of Smith. Poor Al! He governed New York brilliantly and he made a manly campaign in 1928, and it is nothing short of a major tragedy that disappointment, envy, and the necessity of earning a good living have reduced him to his present servile circumstances. Still sadder, from a strictly artistic standpoint, is his astonishing loss of political acumen and intuition. As a result of it he has succeeded in strengthening his arch-enemy to such a degree that it now appears Roosevelt can either have the nomination or render it worthless to anyone else. If Furtive Frank is nominated early he probably will win, because of the widespread public feeling that he offers some hope while Hoover offers none. It is whispered incessantly around Washington that in the event of Roosevelt's nomination the Raskob-Baruch-Smith forces will enter into a deal with the Republicans whereby Hoover will pledge himself to establish a "national" or "coalition" government patterned roughly on the present British hybrid (a natural surmise, considering Lord Herbert's background), and that the ensuing patriotic rally is guaranteed to return him to the White House. But the picture has other aspects. Any such attempted coup certainly would solidify the South and antagonize the West—so much, indeed, that I should not be surprised to see the hitherto impeccable Borah jumping the party fence to campaign for a Democrat! In short, it looks like Roosevelt—or Hoover.

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ONE long chance remains. If the power trust succeeds in "stopping Roosevelt"—and its agents are boasting privately that he is "stopped"—several million voters (who never heard of Norman Thomas) will be looking for a place to go. And they may find it. There is still a possibility that Hiram Johnson will get into this race. His character and mentality are so vastly superior to Hoover's and his popularity is so much greater than that of any Democrat who might be named, excepting Roosevelt, that the temptation would be tremendous. The fact that the country needs a new party has now penetrated even to the bread lines. Let the old parties confront the country with a choice between Hoover on the one hand and somebody like Baker or Ritchie on the other, and anything might happen. What might happen, of course, is only a luscious conjecture. The chief hope of the long-suffering public probably lies in the Democratic platform. That document should be and probably will be written by members of the House and Senate who not only have some knowledge of present economic conditions and their causes but have occasionally displayed convictions on the subject. Fright and the insistence of a determined man like Senator Cutting may force new language into the Republican platform, but through it the country is bound to recognize the same old hooey and the same old Hoover. On the other hand there is genuine reason to expect something intelligent and constructive in a platform drafted by such thinking men as Cordell Hull, Tom Walsh, Carter Glass, Tom Connally, Bob Wagner, and Frank Walsh. Even among the Democratic wheel-horses it is usually possible to discern a measure of sincerity and intelligence which is entirely lacking on the Republican side, when the Progressives are excluded—and they are always excluded at national conventions. In other words, if Roosevelt were nominated and elected over Hoover on a platform sufficiently honest and unequivocal to convince him that common decency is the best policy, we might start to get somewhere. It is a slender hope, but is there any other?

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MORE significant than all the maneuverings of the professional politicians, it seems to me, is the obvious purpose of certain interests, under cover of the present emergency, to set up some kind of political and economic dictatorship. As the first stage of this movement we are now witnessing the most dishonest, vicious, and formidable campaign of propaganda and slander ever waged against Congress during my lifetime. In the face of harassments and obstacles almost unparalleled, the present Congress has made a devoted effort to do its duty. It has listened patiently to the camp-meeting exhortations of John Garner and the breast-beating orations of Charlie Crisp, and still has managed to do an amazing amount of hard work in a remarkably short time. Yet through the press and the radio it has been subjected to abuse, misrepresentation, and vilification on an unprecedented scale. Who is behind this barrage of calumny? Why, the millionaire morons whose rapacity plunged the country into its present plight. And what is the essence of their complaint? Why, that Congress in six months has failed to restore the health of a nation which they undermined for twenty years by sucking industry and agriculture dry of every drop of blood, thus bankrupting the purchasing power of the consuming public. Talk about demagogues! This is demagoguery on a plane low enough to insult the intelligence of an infant chimpanzee, but there is a well-defined and obvious purpose in it. Already the glib Owen D. Young has advanced the desirability of reposing greater powers in the President, and the ineffable Dave Reed has mentioned the possibility of an "American Mussolini"—although he suggested no candidate, and Al Capone has been put away temporarily. The point is, however, that these people are whipping themselves into a state of preparation for an attempt to overturn the constitutional processes of government and to seize openly the power which they have long exercised by indirect means. It may be stupid, but subtlety has never been characteristic of this particular class.

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IT has been said that nobody ever underestimates the intelligence of the American public, but in the present instance there are grounds for believing that the Congress-baiters and the President-worshipers have overstepped the bounds. For instance, readers of this page will remember the vehemence with which the President a few months ago denounced all attempts to obtain federal aid for the starving as part and parcel of a conspiracy to foist the "dole" upon this country. They should be enlightened to learn now that he is actively advocating a federal loan of $300,000,000 for that very purpose. Even the dread word "food" has ceased to be anathema to this Administration! Because of the peculiar circumstance that all plans for helping the needy are wicked unless the Great Humanitarian thought of them first, and because the entire program of this Administration is summed up in "Let the Reconstruction Finance Corpora-

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tion do it," his methods are certain to differ from those devised by Congress, yet nevertheless he has come over to the idea that the government of the United States owes something to the citizen of the United States who has been reduced to desperation by Administration policies. This dearly bought but happy consummation may be attributed to an awakening on the part of the public or on the part of the Administration or to the fact that an election is imminent. The important and reassuring thing is that our tin-pot candidates for the dictatorship have been compelled to recognize that Congress was right and they were wrong more than a year ago. The year may bring still further enlightenment to them. In this country a moron can always learn something, no matter how many millions he has.

The Future of the Railroads*

By WINTHROP M. DANIELS

THE post-panic period since the fall of 1929 has sufficed to explode a number of illusions as to the future of our railroads. These illusions were entertained from 1920 to 1929, a period in our economic history which is likely to be known as the "fools'-paradise decade." The first legal breakdown came in the midst of this period. This was the elaborate provision in the Esch-Cummins Act of 1920 for the settlement of railroad labor disputes by the tripartisan Railroad Labor Board. That ill-starred tribunal created a record remarkable for nothing so much as the mutual billingsgate of majority and minority opinion. The opposing factions indulged in an undiplomatic interchange of impolite symbols of mutual distrust, and the board was fortunately snuffed out of existence by a repealer in 1926. The cumbrous legal artillery which was substituted by the Railway Labor Act serves today chiefly as "the gun behind the door," to escape which both parties, when the wage question is grave and urgent, resort to direct conference, as in January of this year. In a sense wholly alien to that in which Lord Mansfield coined the phrase, both management and employees realize that "freight is the mother of wages," and that direct negotiation and adjustments are infinitely preferable to the well-meant but dilatory official routine of settlement.

But the futility of this section of the Transportation Act of 1920 has been matched by its demonstrated breakdown in matters of equal importance. Had the Labor Board provision never been made a rider on the other provisions of the law, the country might have anticipated with some considerable confidence that railroad labor disputes and wage controversies would be adjusted eventually through the voluntary process of collective bargaining. Where the Esch-Cummins Act lulled the country into an unfounded sense of security was mainly in the matter of future railway rates, the anticipated fair return on railroad property, the recapture of excess railway earnings, and the speedy realization of railroad consolidation. Indeed, the only marked exception to the disappointing category of achievements under the new law has been the regulation of railroad security issues—a device long before in use by many State commissions in respect of local public utilities.

There were, of course, no factual data upon which to base the optimistic opinion, expressed in Congressional debate on the Act of 1920, that consolidation would bring economies of hundreds of millions of dollars which would be translated into abatements of railway rates and charges. These roseate dreams never had any solid foundation, and the railroads, to do them justice, never made any such pretensions. The fatuous idea seems to have arisen from the conception that railroad operation was like a Ford automobile factory, and that if only the plant could be made large enough, the unit cost of product could be correspondingly lessened.

If the shipping public was misled in anticipating marked abatement of rates, the railroad investors were equally disappointed in expecting assured returns on their securities. The so-called "rate-making provision" proved a delusion. "In the exercise of its power to prescribe just and reasonable rates" the commission was to establish general rate levels such that carriers as a whole were to earn an annual operating income "equal, as nearly as may be, to a fair return" upon the aggregate value of their operating properties. This provision was hailed as the railroads' new Magna Charta. It was supposed to double-track the old single-line Interstate Commerce Act. Before then the act had for its main aim the relief of shippers distressed by unreasonable or unduly prejudicial rates. Thereafter the act was to aim equally at providing annually a fair rate of return upon carrier property as a whole. The law, said the Supreme Court in the Dayton–Goose Creek case, "puts the railroad systems more completely than ever under the fostering guardianship and control of the commission." Investors since the passage of the act have put hundreds of millions of dollars of additional capital into American railroads. Commissioner Woodlock said in a dissenting opinion in 1927: "If any conclusion may fairly be drawn from the fact that capital has been supplied to the railroad industry by investors in the years following 1920, it is the conclusion that in supplying it investors have relied upon the terms of the law, the statements of this commission, and the decisions of the Supreme Court."

It will be well to consider the causes which precluded the realization of the expected rate provision for a fair annual return on railroad property. Primarily, that provision completely overlooked the cyclical rise and fall in industrial conditions. The demand for the service of transportation is at all times a derivative of the contemporaneous output of general industry. Only to the extent that things are being produced and consumed, are being bought and sold, is there an effective demand for their transport. This has always been true for any considerable period of time, even when no abysmal depression such as the present one has been encountered. The railroad freight tonnage which originated in 1921, for example, fell just 25 per cent below the tonnage of the previous year. The average rate per ton mile, how-

* The ninth of a series of articles on economic problems, aiming to suggest a practical program for America. The tenth, Has the Crisis Run Its Course? by Ray Vance, will appear next week.—EDITOR THE NATION.

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ever, was more than 20 per cent higher in 1921 than in 1920; but with major fluctuations of traffic volume the average rate of charge per unit of traffic becomes a factor of wholly secondary importance. Until or unless a substantially constant volume of traffic can be anticipated, no approximate assurance of a virtually constant annual return, gross or net, can be given. In the face of facts only too patent, the Transportation Act of 1920 held forth the expectation that a stable return would be forthcoming. It is hardly necessary to add that what was impossible in a decade of normal ups and downs became almost tragically ludicrous in an industrial debacle such as the present, when weekly car-loadings are hardly more than 50 per cent of what they were in 1929, and when over three-quarters of the Class I railroads, with normal annual revenues over $1,000,000 each, failed in the first two months of the present year to earn their fixed charges of interest, rentals, and taxes.

The failure for twelve successive years to realize, even in a single year, the fair rate of return points to other factors besides the law's mistaken assumption already discussed. If for a few years out of the last twelve the declared fair rate of return had been exceeded, there would arise a possible presumption that, while no constancy in annual return might be attainable, at least the return might be realized on the average, taking one year with another. Marksmen who for twelve consecutive years invariably shoot below the bull's-eye must be chargeable with too low an aim, or with trying to hit an impossible target. The responsibility for the result of continuous failure cannot be put on any one pair of shoulders. The law, the commission, the carriers themselves, Congress, the early distress of agriculture, the expansion of pipe-lines, the enlargement of water carriage, and the growth of motor transport, all contributed in various degrees to the result.

The commission began bravely in 1920 to attempt to solve the insoluble problem that the law had set. The first full year under the new and higher rate levels coincided with a marked industrial recession. The return realized was less than half of what the carriers had been led to expect. In 1922 the commission reduced freight rates by 10 per cent in the hope that the reduction would enlarge the tonnage. The railroads made a *pro forma* protest, but privately admitted that the rate level had been higher than the traffic would bear. While there was no repetition of the cutthroat competition of the early rate-war days, the carriers themselves, in seeking individually to gain traffic or to divert it from other lines, were continually reducing rates. The average revenue per ton mile sank steadily with each successive year. Some of the reductions made by the commission provoked loud outcry from the carriers, but they were doing the same thing themselves. In other cases, where the carriers knew that certain rates were non-compensatory, they were inexcusably dilatory in proposing an advance. The commission's new power of prescribing minimum rates was used most sparingly. Nor was it easy for that body to divest itself of its earlier habit of regarding rates mainly from the shipper's standpoint.

In the meantime the increasingly pronounced agricultural depression had found a voice in the Hoch-Smith resolution. The commission in conformity therewith discovered that rates recently fixed by it were not at the exact bottom of "the zone of reasonableness," and proceeded to depress them further, and even to grant reparation to shippers who had paid the commission-set rates, until the Supreme Court called a halt on this policy of spoliation. Meanwhile the attitude of the commission toward minimizing the valuation on which a return was to be computed was evidenced in the famous O'Fallon case. Apparently the commission has concluded that the rule of rate-making is in abeyance, or in strict subordination to the independent fixing of just and reasonable rates. The assumption of the statute that just rates and fair return are compatible, or the interpretation of the statute to the effect that the resultant return is a regular criterion of justness and reasonableness, has gone by the board. The "fostering guardianship" of the railroads by the commission, of which the Supreme Court spoke, has evidently not materialized.

It is not necessary to determine in just what degree other factors, such as competition by motor vehicles, by water, or by pipe-lines, have cooperated to create the impasse at which the railroads and the commission have arrived. Economic forces more powerful than either have stamped with futility the statute which ostensibly governs them both. The proposed repeal of Section 15a, which contains the rate-making provision, is only a belated recognition of legislative ineptitude. The proposed substitute is a meaningless formula exemplifying the adage that "mistiness is the mother of wisdom." The earlier vituperation against the section as a virtual guaranty of profits, and the earlier homage to the section as "the perfection of reason" and the sheet anchor of the investor, look equally absurd in the grim light of subsequent happenings.

If a legal regulation of return on carrier property is to be again essayed, it might be sought along the line of establishing in advance a basic or standard net operating income for the roads as a whole in each distinct railroad region. There is no reason to suppose that this income would be exactly realized in any particular calendar year. But the defect or excess in such standard earnings might serve as a barometer, exempting the carriers of the region from mandatory or voluntary rate reductions in the period following a deficiency, and entitling the patrons of the roads to rate abatements in the period following excess carrier income. This is the provision in the law in Great Britain, where the 1913 earnings are taken as the standard bench mark, and where the Rates Tribunal makes an annual review of earnings with a view to a recension of the body of rates, as yet, admittedly, without attaining the desired result.

The greater feasibility of such a plan in Great Britain is due to that country's having amalgamated its railways into four systems. It would be facilitated here had our roads been consolidated into a limited number of systems. Of all the prospects held out by the Transportation Act of 1920 none has miscarried so eccentrically as the consolidation project. It is true that large and numerous unifications of control through stock ownership and lease have been effected, with immunity from the anti-trust acts. It is true also that the holding-company device, in extra-legal fashion, may have accomplished the same result, except for the feature of legal immunity. But in no case of major importance has complete consolidation in the strict sense been attained, with its extinction of multitudinous subsidiary corporations, and with full realization of even the limited economies that full-fledged consolidation would permit. For those who are at-

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tracted by the modern economic device known as "economic planning," it must be a sobering reflection that a presumably expert commission took almost ten years before promulgating what the statute required—a final plan for the consolidation of the railroads into a limited number of systems. During this period the virus which the consolidation provisions of the law had injected into the veins of railroad men worked ill. Ambitious executives were bitten with the illusion of grandeur, and dreamed of transportation empires worthy of Harriman. Others, fearful of possible dismemberment of their present mileage, or of a blocking of their own cherished plans of annexation or extension, sought through affiliated holding companies to acquire rail securities as trading assets which would strengthen their strategic position. The placement of new shops to be centrally located on the new systems was deferred in some cases, because no one could tell in advance just what lines each system would comprise. Employees saw their rights of seniority and pensions jeopardized by a possible severance from their long-time corporate employers. Short lines saw an opportunity of realizing on their nuisance values by threatening to oppose any plan of unification which did not absorb their properties at inflated purchase prices. Regional racketeering received an impetus by the possibility of intervening in opposition to proposed unifications of lines if the project did not pay tribute to grandiose local aspirations. The commission's "final plan," moreover, embodied some fantastic mergers of lines which stretched from the Missouri River to the Florida Everglades, the chief components of which are at present in the bankruptcy courts. Presidential and Congressional interference in the settlement only intensified the chaos, and the labor organizations, recognizing that many of the economies were to be effected by labor displacements, formed a bloc to checkmate the whole design. No such comedy of errors ever before attended what was proposed as a serious economic design.

To effect consolidation with reasonable promptness, the spur of compulsion must be applied. With federal power which is exclusive and plenary over interstate commerce, this should not be an impossible task. The present law conditions the capitalization of the new consolidated systems upon the commission's valuations of their constituent properties. If these valuations are disputed, and they frequently are, the law necessitates an interminable delay. This provision might be advantageously junked, leaving with the commission a sound discretion to require a capital set-up in each case compatible with the public interest. The official "plan" of consolidation might also go to the scrap-heap without loss. If the companies were allowed, or required, to propose their own plans for consolidation—and the commission might, as now, exercise a veto over them—we should be farther along than we are today. We might also wisely take another leaf from the English statute book by requiring that each consolidation should provide financially, as, for example, by pensions, for the displacement of labor which was occasioned by it.

While the current depression has radically decreased the demand for rail transportation, the railways have also been suffering from the rapid extension of the supply of transport services, mainly offered by motor vehicles. It is only too apparent that in the domain of passenger conveyance the railroads must be content with playing a subordinate role. With over 23,000,000 registered private cars, the possibility of the railroads ever regaining their former dominance in passenger transportation is gone.

Truck competition is an even more vital thrust at the railroads, in large measure because rail movements are in a regulatory harness as to the requirement of publishing and observing scheduled rates and conforming to the acts controlling the hours of service of their employees. Even if public interstate buses and both common carrier and contract trucks be eventually subjected to the same regulation as railroads, the private car and the private truck will permanently retain a substantial volume of traffic. The rail companies are keenly alive to the menace of the trucker, and the annexation of motor equipment to their own operative apparatus is a sign that they recognize the inevitable. The carriage of heavy carload freight, however, particularly for long hauls, is the railroads' least vulnerable citadel.

The future of rates is to be determined by the inevitable future law of costs. "What the traffic will cost" may not improbably displace "what the traffic will bear" as a transportation watchword. It can hardly be anticipated that the regulatory effort, already apparent in Germany, to restrict road haulage artificially in order to protect rail tonnage or earnings can eventually prevail against advancing technique in the world of transport. It has been proposed to meet the difficult problem of unregulated truck competition by giving to the railroads the same unrestricted powers as the truckers in operating trucks on the highways. It may be urged in opposition that this would enable the railway treasuries to cover the loss on highway operation until the independent trucking companies had been killed off. It would seem preferable to permit rail carriers to acquire substantial interests in large trucking companies and in motor-bus lines, with the anticipation that this arrangement will tend to allocate to rail and highway the traffic which each can most appropriately handle.

The question of our ultimate governmental policy toward railroads, whether by a changed system of regulation or by eventual government ownership and operation, is complicated by the present world-wide depression. If economic recovery is delayed for several years, the possibility of rational choice in the matter may simply disappear. The question will then resolve itself not into the query whether we deliberately prefer governmental ownership, but whether we can avoid it. The holding by insurance companies and mutual savings banks of something like $4,000,000,000 of railway bonds in their portfolios may dictate government advances to the railroads for a time, in order to prevent default on bond interest or maturities. But should these advances grow to an amount of great magnitude, it will be difficult to oppose the proposition that there should be federal representation on railroad directorates. This could easily presage government ownership outright. Security-owners of British railroads are said to be doubtful whether to continue their present status or to exchange their holdings for government bonds which might be issued to purchase the properties. It is by no means impossible that a similar tendency might develop in this country. Stock equities in many of our strongest companies have shrunk to almost microscopic proportions. Receiverships have been avoided only by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation's coming to the rescue. We are hardly aware of the extent to which the federal government in this

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Administration of "sturdy individualism" has gone in underwriting private industry. The demonstrated failure of the tariff to help the farmer has compelled the Farm Board to buy up and hold off the market stupendous quantities of wheat and cotton in a vain attempt to peg their prices. The Farm Loan machinery has put its credit at the service of hundreds of thousands of distressed agriculturalists. The frozen assets of hundreds of banks have been taken over into Uncle Sam's bosom, and schemes innumerable for giving Treasury aid to the building trades and to all sorts of enterprises, public and private, swarm in the halls of legislation.

It is questionable whether the railroad managements themselves realize the moral liability they incur in invoking federal aid. "The borrower is servant to the lender," as they are likely to discover to their cost. They may shy at receiverships and reorganizations, and find that they have escaped both at the cost of having permanently become the vassals of the government. The writer believes this would be an irreparable misfortune, but cannot affect to be blind to the threatened outcome.

In the Driftway

FROM the *New Statesman and Nation's* London Diary the Drifter collects some pertinent information about war censorship. In France two press censors, Marcel Beyer and Paul Allard, have published a book called "Les secrets de la censure pendant la guerre." They let out, according to the London Diary, "a quantity of interesting facts about the manufacture of public opinion in France during the war."

> In each country censorship was at first justified on the ground that it was necessary to prevent the publication of information which would be useful to the enemy, and it was then found that its most important function was to "uphold morale." Very odd things were done in the name of morality in France, and not quite the same things that were done in England. The French press, for instance, was not allowed to indulge in sensational stories about German atrocities and, especially, about German offenses against women and children. They were not, as a rule, permitted to paint fantastic pictures of Germany's inevitable doom. The French took the very sensible view that the war would last a long time, and that the French public should be prepared for prolonged hardships. But the gospel of hate and fight-to-the-last-man-and-last-penny was even more rigidly kept up than in England.

* * * * *

NO French paper was permitted to use the word "peace" without the adjective "victorious" before it. The radical *Œuvre* wickedly came out with a daily motto as follows: "After the night comes the day; after war comes —— (word banned by the censorship)." It was not permitted to make any reference to the cold winter of 1916, "as it would remind people of the shortage of coal." "One day," the London Diary goes on, "a chimpanzee escaped from the Paris Zoo and found refuge in the garden of the Elysée Palace. The censors were instructed . . . to suppress 'every reference—even in the most respectful form—to the chimpanzee's meeting with Madame Poincaré.'"

NOT all the rulings were as harmless as this one. Some of them were very subtly as well as cruelly effective. When the Caillaux affair was disturbing the press, orders were given out, a fortnight before Caillaux was arrested, "to say nothing against Caillaux, but only to reproduce *every German article favorable to him.*" The Drifter quotes from the London Diary once more.

> One of the authors of the book describes how he "passed" an unusually virulent article by Maurice Barrès on the "partition" of Germany after the Allies' victory. This happened at the end of 1914, just at the time when Germany, disappointed in the war, might well have agreed to an "honorable" peace. The Barrès article came just in time to stir up new aggressive (or defensive) energy in Germany. It was reproduced by every German paper and had a marked effect in stopping all peace talk. "I had an uncomfortable feeling," says the censor, "that if it had not been for my carelessness the war might have ended in 1915."

The writer of the London Diary hopes that the book will be translated. It should be, and should be circulated as widely as possible. Nothing could more effectively explode the myth that wars are prosecuted for national honor and must be continued until that honor is satisfied. War merely becomes a business, carried on like any other business, but one in which the entrepreneurs have little more ultimate success than the individual laborer. In other words, not worth doing.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Economic Sanctions

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: A growing number of friends and admirers of *The Nation* are seriously concerned with its indiscriminate opposition to all proposals for the use of economic sanctions or other measures of non-intercourse in the preservation of world peace.

Applied to the rigid and drastic provisions of Article XVI of the League Covenant or to an independent boycott undertaken by the United States the criticisms of *The Nation* have been well taken. It is unfortunate, however, that you have not given detailed and sympathetic consideration to the proposals of a committee of eminent and not illiberal or uninformed citizens headed by President Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia University. This "Committee on Economic Sanctions," after a thorough canvass of the very difficulties in other plans you have so ably pointed out, has suggested a procedure which is carefully designed to avoid them—or at least reduce them to a minimum—and at the same time to avoid the moral and material dangers of do-nothing isolationism.

The committee has proposed an amendment to the Pact of Paris which would in effect pledge the signatories jointly to refrain from giving such measures of support to a nation which violated or threatened to violate the pact as would assist that nation in the violation. Such action, as provided for by treaty, would be neither war nor a provocation to war; neither would it require warlike emotions for its support. It would not involve the United States in the dangerous commitments of the present League Covenant. It would be flexible enough to reduce to a minimum both the suffering of noncombatants in the aggressor nation and industrial losses in the others. And finally it would not require the use of armed force, but enforcement

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merely through joint action by the port and police authorities of each state.

The Nation has so far refrained from a serious consideration of the alternative to such an amendment. Suppose a state were to go to war now in violation of the pact—a supposition already proved to be within the realm of practical possibility. Would *The Nation*—could *The Nation*—keep silent while American munition-makers shipped arms to the offender and American bankers furnished it with credit? To do so would condone the subsidizing of war and of the violation of treaties. Unscrupulous commercial interests might advocate such policies from motives of private profit, but surely *The Nation* would oppose them. Why not take this stand in advance when by so doing you would buttress the cause of peace?

The do-nothing policy to which *The Nation* would be committed by opposing all such pledges in advance creates a continuous menace of war by emasculating the will to peace. The continued refusal of the United States to declare its policy in case of a violation of the Pact of Paris prevents any effective joint action by the other nations to preserve the peace. On the other hand, a commitment by the United States, such as the Butler committee has proposed, would greatly reduce the likelihood of war. It might even create that sense of international security which is a condition precedent to genuine disarmament —and without the necessity of any international armed forces or further futilities of peace by the sword.

New York, June 1 EVANS CLARK

[*The Nation* is by no means indiscriminately opposed, as Mr. Clark suggests, to *all* "measures of non-intercourse in the preservation of world peace." Nor is it in any sense adverse to taking in advance a stand that "would buttress the cause of peace." For example, *The Nation* is steadfastly opposed to loans and the shipment of munitions to belligerent countries. We believe, too, that the cause of peace would probably be strengthened, in any case psychologically, were the government to state clearly and in advance that it would refuse to permit armaments to be shipped and credits to be extended to countries violating the Kellogg Pact. But obviously it would have to determine beforehand precisely what constitutes violation of the Kellogg Pact. Here we have again the old problem of the definition of aggression, which has never been solved. It is certainly questionable whether a technical violation of the Kellogg Pact would be proof of aggression or war guilt in any given case. But waiving this difficulty, can we in any event accept as sincere the announced intention of this or any other government to take definite measures to restrain or punish an "aggressor" when it has no way of determining exactly what constitutes aggression? In such a situation would there not be more than a bare possibility that national policy or self-interest would determine which of two parties to a war or threatened war should be regarded as the aggressor?

But Mr. Clark, foreseeing this possibility, wants all the signatories to the Kellogg Pact to bind themselves beforehand to act in concert in refusing to give "such measures of support to the nation which violated or threatened to violate the pact as would assist that nation in the violation." In the absence of a concrete definition of aggression, how are these sixty-odd governments to reach an agreement on which of two belligerents in any given case shall be denounced as the aggressor? Even supposing that every signatory was able to take a completely disinterested and unselfish view of the problem, can such an agreement be reached among so many governments in the heat and hurry of the opening days of a war? Is it not more likely that protracted negotiations would be necessary, thus delaying that immediate unanimous action which is to prevent war?

Mr. Clark would include in his universal embargo not only credits and munitions, but other support as well. The embargo, however, would be modified so as to minimize "both the suffering of noncombatants in the aggressor nation and industrial losses in the others." It is an inescapable fact that a boycott or embargo—call it what you will—must be complete to be effective. This modification of the original economic-sanctions plan simply weakens that plan without eliminating any of its vices. Any such action, however peaceful in intent it may appear, is certain to arouse the hostility of the nation affected against those nations which seek to enforce it.—EDITOR THE NATION.]

Instead of Roosevelt

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I notice with interest that *The Nation* apparently does not consider Mr. Roosevelt a liberal at all. I wish you would examine the record of Harry Byrd. He has been liberal in action, which is more important, I believe, than liberality in words. He put through the Virginia anti-lynching bill. The Virginia water-power bill has no strings to it and has become a vital element in State policy. Byrd was the first Southern politician to throw the revenge lobby of the Anti-Saloon League out of his Capitol. And there are many other things.

Richmond, Va., May 31 ROY FLANNAGAN

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I favor Albert C. Ritchie for the Presidency, and in view of your recent lukewarm article, I should like you to know why. My favor for Ritchie is quite a matter of recent development and is in no way associated with partisan or friendly bias. I have no ax to grind. Under the mechanics of our political system only an idealist might envisage a perfect political state. I cannot see it and I believe that our aim should be lower. Against the established record of Hoover, the transparently deliberate evasions of Baker, and the weak-sister constitution of Roosevelt, Ritchie's record, his clarity of statement, his political courage, and his freedom from direct big-business alliances make him stand out in bold relief as a logical and common-sense choice.

I believe our need for radical and immediate political reform is more vital than is generally acknowledged; witness Mencken's recent opinion that the depression has been greatly exaggerated. While I believe your general and broader program, not excepting socialism, should have consideration, its hope of accomplishment is too remote to meet our present emergency. Under the circumstances I believe in accepting the most definite and least risky alternative that offers. Ritchie, in my humble opinion, fits these specifications.

Baltimore, Md., May 30 CARL S. BLOEDE

Unemployment and War

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: On page 453 of *The Nation* for April 20 you say, "We have millions of unemployed, most of whom would be at work had we not gone to war." I challenge this statement—in fact, I flatly deny its truth. (Do not mistake my intent. My pacifism is at least as ardent as your own.) Your error is that you have the cart before the horse; you confuse cause and effect. War does not cause unemployment. It is more true that unemployment causes war, although both are the direct result of capitalistic crises, or "depressions," those ever-recurrent and continually more severe periods of "overproduction"—which is really underconsumption. The purchasing power of

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the great mass of the people is not sufficient to buy back what they have produced for the capitalists; consequently there is overproduction, unemployment, a frantic struggle for expansion of foreign markets which meets the opposition of other nations bent on the same purpose—and then war.

Had the World War not occurred, this epidemic of unemployment would have become as acute as at present at least ten years sooner. In fact, it was already in evidence in 1914.

Madison, Wis., May 19 A. M. TUTTLE

[The causes of the present crisis are of course complex. If, however, the World War had not dislocated industry and produced the enormous inflation of the world price level, it is altogether unlikely that we should have experienced a collapse in any way approaching the present one in severity or extent.—EDITOR THE NATION.]

Georgia Power

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: My attention has just been called to the editorial on the Insulls in your issue of May 25. This editorial contains a reference to the Georgia Power Company which is inaccurate and misleading. The Georgia Power Company is not connected in any way, directly or indirectly, with the Insull group of utility properties. It is probable that the writer had in mind the Georgia Power and Light Company, which supplies electric service in a portion of southern Georgia and which is a member of the Insull group of utilities. The Georgia Power and Light Company is entirely separate and distinct from the Georgia Power Company.

While this confusion of names was no doubt unintentional, you can appreciate the effect of this erroneous statement upon the minds of those Georgia Power Company stockholders who happened to see the paragraph or had their attention called to it.

Atlanta, Ga., May 25 P. S. ARKWRIGHT,
President Georgia Power Company

For Readers in Hudson County

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I should like to form a progressive group in Hudson County, New Jersey, for liberal discussion and voluntary, independent, progressive political action. Such a group is sorely needed here and I feel that *The Nation* reaches the type of person to which such an idea will appeal. Interested readers may communicate with me at 54 Park Street.

Jersey City, June 1 J. OWEN GRUNDY

Contributors to This Issue

HARRY F. WARD, secretary of the Methodist Federation for Social Service and professor of Christian ethics at Union Theological Seminary, has recently been making a study of conditions in Soviet Russia.

PAUL Y. ANDERSON is the national correspondent of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*.

WINTHROP M. DANIELS is professor of transportation at Yale University.

JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS is the author of "The Epic of America."

ALICE BEAL PARSONS is the author of "John Merrill's Pleasant Life."

Finance

A Rift in the Clouds

SEVERAL events have recently occurred which, if they are permitted to work out their proper effects, should tangibly improve the business situation. The tax bill has become law; the average citizen probably does not yet realize what he will have to pay in the name of fiscal probity, but he will realize it as the year rolls on, and it should be a wholesome lesson. A corporation having $100,000,000 initial capital and headed by Thomas W. Lamont of the Morgan firm has been formed to invest in bonds and other sound securities. The fact that this enterprise will work for its own profit, with no duty to "support" or "stabilize" the market, has made a far more profound impression on the public than some recent quixotic efforts to halt the progress of deflation by using hundreds of millions of the government's money.

Foreign-exchange rates, recently at levels which permitted a torrent of gold to leave the country, in the greatest export movement of which there is any record, have moved sharply in favor of the dollar, and the prospects now favor a stanching of the gold flow, or possibly its reversal if European unsettlement grows more threatening. As a result of the gold shipments the United States stands revealed as colossally strong. In spite of the enormous losses of last autumn—$398,000,000 was shipped in October alone—we actually gained gold on the year's transactions; and this year, when exports have amounted to more than $100,000,000 in more than one month, imports have been coming in at a rate which has substantially cut down the loss. Our ability to ship a billion dollars in eighteen months, and thereafter to spare a second billion if necessary, ought at least to convey an answer to those who have been theorizing about this country's being forced off the gold basis.

A change in the trend of events, a sense that business was once more moving forward under its own steam and steerage, would be highly important for other reasons than that of immediate material gain. For such a change would at once bring within the range of practical discussion all those hopeful plans for social reconstruction and financial and business reform which have been so deeply confused, in our common thinking, with schemes for curing the depression. The two fields of effort are entirely distinct. It now seems fairly plain that a depression cannot be cured by any of the "stimuli" which have been so lavishly applied in recent months, and it is equally plain that none of the carefully designed plans (whatever may be their merits) for managed currencies, planned economies, or rational debt and price adjustment has the faintest chance of being adopted, or even of being seriously discussed, amid the confusion and alarm incident to a great deflationary movement. The reason lies near the surface in human nature: each of these plans involves, or seems to involve, the possibility of loss through change; whereas the more a man loses, the more desperately he clings to whatever is left. Each implies common effort and agreement; and at a time like this conflicting interests are rampant. Business reformers, then, will find in an era of reviving trade the most promising milieu for their efforts.

What is written here is in no sense a prediction that the "turn" is at hand. Present hopeful indications may be reversed by the critical events of June and July, by continued weakness in commodity prices, by the poor corporate earnings which will certainly be recorded during the rest of the year, by autumn politics. A beginning must be made, however, and there seems at least a fair possibility that a beginning has been made.

S. PALMER HARMAN

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Books, Drama, Films

Potential Christ

By EMANUEL EISENBERG

A subtler crucifixion than the nail
Has etched its exquisite line across his form.
The frigid triumph in his gaunt, pale
Face melts into a posthumously warm
Forgiveness for unwitting humankind.
Belated Magdalenes surrender tears
To swooping skies and rack themselves to find
A pliable story for senescent years.

His undimmed eyes send vision-fingered sleuths
To garner twelve disciples from among
The thronged observers (preferably youths
Because of their high ardor). Having sung
An Eli, Eli, he encounters earth
In sure anticipation of rebirth.

2033—or 1933?

Thunder and Dawn. By Glenn Frank. The Macmillan Company. $3.50.

THE somewhat cryptic title of this book is further explained in the subtitle as "The Outlook for Western Civilization with Special Reference to the United States." That the world is in a mess at the moment is obvious to anyone. The object of Mr. Frank's work is to analyze the mess and to point a way out.

The book is a useful one in spite of obvious faults. The reader is tired by its diffuseness, and at the very start wonders why he should have to wade through six pages about a house-party at a rich banker's in order to get on his way to the real problem. Later in one paragraph I counted eight sentences expressing the same idea in eight different phrasings. The intelligent reader may also be repelled by overemphasis, exclamation points being almost as numerous as stars in the Milky Way. On the other hand, the general reader who is not familiar at first hand with the large literature now accumulating on our ills and their future will probably find two sections of the book important and instructive.

One of these gives a very good summary of the outpourings of "the prophets of doom," and the other summarizes the "literature and leadership of hope." By the end of the first 150 pages the reader has acquired a better acquaintance with all the fears and hopes of commentators on our situation than he could probably gain from any other work. That is well worth doing, even though the treatment might have been much condensed to its improvement.

Having presented both sides of the case to court, the author proceeds, not so much to judge between them, as to offer his own views as to our mess. Disentangled from a good deal of verbiage in the next 250 pages, we may note two of the chief threads of Mr. Frank's argument—one relating to the nature of the present mess, and the other to the way out.

As to the first, the author appears to align himself clearly with those who consider our crisis as something unique, unprecedented alike both in quality and importance. Of course no situation repeats itself precisely in human history in all its details and factors. Nevertheless, certain broad generalizations may be made as to recurring crises in the economic world. It is the belief of the reviewer that this depression does not constitute a "new era" any more than did the so-called prosperity of 1929. The old "new era" talk of hope has been displaced by a new "new era" talk of gloom. It does not appear that the author has marshaled any facts to prove that the present situation is as unique as he makes out, and the part of the book in which he analyzes the economic depression is the weakest.

He seems, for example, to be amazed by what he asserts as a fact, that the depression came at the end of 1929 when "never was there less defensible excuse for economic depression." As I pointed out in the *Outlook* in December, 1928, there were many red lights already swinging as danger signals, and the economic structure had become dangerously out of balance. The wonder is not that the crash came at the end of 1929 but that it had not come sooner. Other generalizations also give us pause as we read, such as the statement that failure of leadership alone accounted for the agricultural depression; that self-interest has never created a civilization at once durable and satisfying; that in previous depressions the people at large did not search for a cause of their troubles; or that people in the pre-machine age did not have beauty in their individual lives and possessions but only in "a few monumental enterprises." Even the term "Western man" is used in such a way as to leave us questioning what it means when the author speaks of "the millions of the West" as having won the recent war. Surely the German and the Austrian are "Western men" if the Frenchman and the Englishman are.

Unless the present situation is to pass as other economic crises have, there would seem to be little hope for the world if we have to wait for the author's suggested means of salvation, which include nothing less than a new Renaissance, a new Reformation, and a new Industrial Revolution. These may come in time, but they cannot come quickly enough to save the present situation. That situation, in the opinion of the reviewer, will be saved as others have been by the working out of economic laws upon a recalcitrant humanity. If that takes place, the next generation will again taste prosperity, and the Renaissance, Reformation, and Revolution may wait. Without that, humanity may gradually descend, in centuries, to the new Dark Age which the prophets of gloom predict. That, however, is an ultimate fate, not our immediate problem. For that, the above three R's are an inadequate solution. That "dawn" is far removed from the present "thunder." At present people are intensely interested in 1933; few care and fewer can predict about 2033. The book contains, however, as I have said, useful summaries of present literature and suggestive comment on the possible future.

JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS

Bullfights and Goya

Letters from Spain. By Karel Capek. Translated by Paul Selver. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $2.

PERHAPS we have no right to ask that so disarmingly casual a collection of random travel impressions as this should tell us anything new. The ideal traveler is he who brings keen perceptions and a somewhat instructed mind to an interesting subject, and Dr. Capek does this. But I confess to disappointment that he should have done it before the revolution. I opened his book with eager anticipation of what the clever master of the puppets in "R. U. R." might have to say of a social and political overturn which, if we are to believe our Spanish friends, is on the way to accomplishing some of the most cherished aims of social revolutionaries everywhere,

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without resorting to as catastrophic methods as those of the Russian Soviets. What a subject for a writer who adds to the historical background and aesthetic appreciation necessary to perceive the lineaments of old Spain an awareness of the present! But Dr. Capek wrote before the revolution.

And writing before the revolution he seems to have been in a mellow, appreciative, godlike, and somewhat lazy mood. We relax when we travel, and Dr. Capek relaxed. We feel inordinately superior and magnified, for here is the daily life of numberless people docilely deployed before our attentive eyes, and here is our consciousness vastly magnified by the various expressions of other consciousnesses. But every traveler knows that to fight back through our mellow relaxation and our magnified consciousness to the precise expression which will convey to others even a small part of what we see requires Brobdignagian effort. Dr. Capek fights back only occasionally. For the most part he contents himself with lyrical lists of place-names, lists of food, of wines, of dances, of songs.

Certain phenomena, however — notably Goya, Seville, Moorish architecture, and a bullfight—startle him into expression that is variously vehement, caustic, delicately precise, sensitive, charming. "You might say that Goya turned man inside out, peering through his nostrils and his yawning gullet, studying his misshapen vileness in a distorting mirror. It is like a nightmare, like a shriek of horror and protest." His delightful description of the Alcazar really transports us to it, invokes in us the lyrical mood with which it inspired him. And in his lively account of a bullfight we see the good doctor struggling comically between disgust for the butchery, exhilaration over the spectacle, his civilized desire to retch at the sight of the bestiality of the crowd, and his knowledge that the ability to stomach this naive slaughter is absolutely necessary to the properly tailored modern aesthete.

If you don't mind deciphering shorthand, piecing together stray notes never quite sorted out or made explicit, perhaps you ought to make a place on your shelves for this irritatingly lazy, yet sometimes exciting little book.

ALICE BEAL PARSONS

An American Reformer

Portrait of an Independent: Moorfield Storey, 1845-1929. By M. A. De Wolfe Howe. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.50.

MOORFIELD STOREY was an extremely pestiferous person to the highly respectable classes in American life. He was a Harvard man of most excellent family, a patriot, a lawyer of great distinction and ability, and completely fearless. These things, it might seem, would have entitled him to unlimited honor and distinction. Oh, no. He was also a reformer, and therefore a crank, a chronic fault-finder, a "little American," frequently quite unbearable. He was particularly disloyal to Harvard because at times he criticized it and its policies, when, as we all know, a true Harvard man must always believe that his university is one hundred per cent perfect and right at all times. The trouble was, perhaps, that Mr. Storey, in addition to being naturally independent, was early exposed to the pernicious influence of one American whom it is now quite the custom to denounce as a dreadful demagogue, namely, Charles Sumner, whose private secretary Storey was from November, 1867, to May, 1869. As Mr. Howe explains: "In the eyes of the Boston circles to which the Storey family belonged, Sumner, for all his arrogance and intemperance of thought and speech, was a figure of heroic aspect." At any rate, Charles Sumner had courage, ethical standards, and the readiness to criticize at great length without ever counting the cost to himself. That was also the trouble with Storey. He came back from Washington determined to insist upon fundamental principles of justice and civic morality; this, to quote Mr. Howe again, "was inseparable from the conduct of his life in general."

So he fought hard for the things in which he was interested, notably for civil-service reform, for the rights of the Negroes, for justice to the Indians, for freedom for the Filipinos, for tariff reform, for independence in politics generally.. He was a distinguished member of the group which contained such men as Henry and Charles Francis Adams, George William Curtis, Carl Schurz, Richard Henry Dana, Charles Eliot Norton, and Edwin Lawrence Godkin. In other words, he belonged to the cranks who were anathema to the Henry Cabot Lodges and Theodore Roosevelts, as well as to all the bosses of the day—Platt, Quay, Hanna, Croker, and all the rest. Why must the Republic produce men of this type? Why do men like these insist upon criticizing their own government and its acts? Why can they not worship at the shrine of things as they are?

Especially in the cause of the Filipinos and the Negroes did Moorfield Storey distinguish himself. Were the Republic's rewards distributed according to merit, Storey would have received the highest honors and decorations available. Nothing could call him off once he had made up his mind and had it confirmed by his conscience—no ridicule, no abuse, no ostracism, no reflections upon his patriotism. His Harvard associates could not understand why he should criticize that institution in the matter of its football games and its treatment of Negro students; that affected him not at all. As for the Filipinos, they never had a more faithful or a truer friend, and he labored for their freedom until the last day of his life. Like many others of his school he was quite unaware of the conflict between capital and labor, of the economic abuses of our time. He did not always see that he was often concerned with symptoms of the disease of the body politic instead of with the real causes. He was a liberal without being a radical, a reformer without the least touch of the social revolutionist. But he lived an enormously useful life, and was the last of the distinguished group to which he belonged. It is a profound misfortune that it has left almost no successors, that the day of the standards which its members upheld in our American life has practically passed.

Curiously enough, one blind spot in his eye related to the Sacco-Vanzetti case. Storey was indignant that anyone should challenge the courts of Massachusetts which he had himself so long adorned. To him the protest of members of the Harvard Law School against this horrible miscarriage of justice was as inexplicable as it was damnable. He did not wish them expelled, but he did wish that Harvard would make sure that the students who were exposed to such treasonable doctrines were also exposed to the true facts as he saw them. He could, and did, carry to the Supreme Court of the United States lawsuits involving the life and liberty and rights of citizenship of colored Americans equally innocent, but he never had any doubt at all that Massachusetts should stand by the one biased judge who put Sacco and Vanzetti to death.

Mr. Howe has put all the salient facts about Mr. Storey into this volume, has treated him with scrupulous fairness and made every effort to be just—quite obviously and deliberately, for Mr. Howe is himself of a different type, with different views from the subject of his memoirs. In this fairness the author lives up to the best New England tradition. But the book suffers from the innumerable quotations, long and short, from Storey's letters—he was a terrifically long-winded letter-writer, and he wrote incessantly. Hence we have a record, and a complete one, but not an inspired or inspiring portrait of one who was a very great citizen and entitled to the respect of every American.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

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Shorter Notices

The Master of the House. By Radclyffe Hall. Jonathan Cape and Robert Ballou. $2.50.

Here is the first novel that Radclyffe Hall has written since the publication of "The Well of Loneliness." Everyone remembers the storm that the earlier book raised, a curious accident set into motion by the sudden horror of a British censor. The book, in fact, was neither a great work of art nor a deliberate affront to English morals. It was merely a mild, somewhat sentimental story, a perverted Victorian love story if you will, written in a style resembling the chaste cadences employed by our own Thornton Wilder. Surely Radclyffe Hall's intentions were not vicious, nor even bold; if decadent, they were mournful and sweet—and perhaps a trifle slushy. The present novel follows the same tradition—but those who are looking for another "Well of Loneliness" theme will be disappointed. The Christ legend is retold as the story of a Provençal carpenter's son, Christophe Bénedit, a chubby little fellow with golden-reddish curls. The symbolism is obvious, childish, and saccharine to the proper degree of stickiness, but by no means offensive. Within her limits, which are not wide, Radclyffe Hall is a conscientious artist, and her delight in telling this simple story was no doubt genuine. There are many roseate descriptions of the way French peasants live, of their charm, of their well-knit bodies, of their refreshing physical health. Little Christophe grows into a good-looking young man who values his virginity more than anything else on earth and defends it against the passion of a lusty French girl who should have known better than to make the first advances to a boy of his disposition. The war breaks out and Christophe goes into battle. He is crucified by the wicked Germans.

Nine Women. By Halina Sokolnikova. Translated by H. C. Stevens. With an Introduction by Mrs. Sidney Webb. Jonathan Cape and Robert Ballou. $3.

A Soviet woman writer gives in this volume an account of nine women of the French Revolution, some of them rebels themselves, others influencing their husbands by steadfast devotion or intrigue according to their natures, and one, Mme du Barry, stealthily returning from her safe exile in an attempt to salvage some of her expensive gewgaws and paying for her covetousness with her life. The book is biased, but it is interesting. Apart from the liveliness of its style it is made additionally entertaining by the feminine turn its bias often takes, in descriptions of calculated toilettes, of tricks of posture, and so on. The effect is an odd one, for it is an amusing surprise to find "cattiness" in otherwise well-done conventional historical portraits.

The Old Norse Sagas. By Halvdan Koht. W. W. Norton and Company. $2.50.

Some of the Icelandic sagas, dating from the thirteenth century, remain as living literature, and it is to an analysis of their timeless attractions that Professor Koht devotes the bulk of his lectures. Within a hundred years the art of the sagas flourished and died, and by illustrations, quotations, and résumé of the narratives, Professor Koht convincingly demonstrates that it was a great century. His aesthetic judgments are less impressive, and it seems unnecessary to go into a long explanation of the historical distortions that occurred as the story-tellers manipulated common knowledge to produce their dramatic effects. The book on the whole is simple and direct, and leads the reader to an interest in an important literary period.

Russia. By Hans von Eckardt. Translated by Catherine Alison Phillips. Alfred A. Knopf. $7.50.

This book arrives with extravagant encomiums from the German press. The reason is obvious. Herr Eckardt dwells so lovingly on the part Germans played in Russia as conquerors, dynasts, settlers, diplomats, and experts. For American readers its chief value is its bulk and comprehensiveness. It contains 13 maps and 127 illustrations. A vast amount of information is presented, but its ordering and meanings are left to the reader himself. Interpretations and conclusions are vague; the writing has a stuffiness which the translation preserves. It is divided into three main sections: about a third of the volume is devoted to the past history of Russia; a somewhat larger section is given to an account of the revolution and a description of the new social, political, and economic institutions in Russian life; the last section is a description of the Russian land and its resources, and the opportunities it offers to, and the limitations it imposes upon, its inhabitants. The book is undoubtedly useful, but only for want of a better one.

Drama

A Booby Prize and Some Others

"BRIDAL WISE" (Cort Theater) is an amusing concoction obviously intended for the warm weather. It is admirably performed by James Rennie and by the still charming Madge Kennedy, but it is so thoroughly unpretentious that it requires no further comment beyond the remark that the proceedings are considerably enlivened by the presence of two unexpectedly diverting children—one black and one white. On the other hand, "Christopher Comes Across" (Royale Theater) is so painfully pretentious and so laboriously unsuccessful that the less said about it the better. The Christopher of the title is no less a person than Columbus himself, but none of the previous attempts to burlesque history have been so completely unfortunate, despite the wasted efforts of a good cast. I think that I caught all the most elaborate obscenities, but I was still not amused.

Obviously not much more is to be expected of the expiring season, and I shall now proceed to the distribution of our annual but purely honorary prizes for the Best Plays and the Best Performances. They are hereby conferred upon:

"Mourning Becomes Electra." Eugene O'Neill's three-part tragedy which rises above the mere pathos that is the most our drama ordinarily achieves and strikes the note of genuine tragedy.

"Brief Moment." In which S. N. Behrman again demonstrates his right to be called our most accomplished writer of pure and almost wholly intellectual comedy.

"Reunion in Vienna." A joyous comedy which provides so delightful a romp for Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne that one needs to read the text in order to learn that the play is every bit as good as the performance.

"Of Thee I Sing." A musical satire on current politics which is at once so lively and so stinging that even the grave Pulitzer committee was inspired to throw precedent to the winds and to please nearly everybody by distinguishing it with the Pulitzer Prize.

"There's Always Juliet." One of the rarest of all dramatic phenomena—a comedy of pure sentiment which is always fresh, genuine, and delightful.

"Springtime for Henry." In which Benn W. Levy abandons both good sense and sound morality in order to become deliriously absurd.

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Alla Nazimova and Alice Brady for two performances in "Mourning Becomes Electra"—both so fine that there is no point in discussing which of them was the best.

Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne for acting "Reunion in Vienna" so dashingly that (*vide supra*) one was inclined to give them almost too much of the credit for a delightful evening.

Romney Brent for demonstrating in "The Warrior's Husband" his genius for a kind of artificial acting which makes one long to see him in Molière.

Ed Wynn for making folly an art and creating a fool with a perfectly defined individuality.

All in all the season was a hard one for those of the managers who did not happen to own one of the few great successes. For dramatic critics, on the other hand, it was rather more rewarding than most.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

"Hey Nonny, Nonny," at the Shubert Theater, is a fairly good summer girls-and-music show but does not manage to be more than that. It is more intelligent than most efforts of the kind, with satirical lyrics and sketches which show the influence of the "Of Thee I Sing" school. Frank Sullivan contributes a parody of "Mourning Becomes Electra," there is an amusing sketch showing how Billy Minsky could help the Metropolitan; the principals are pleasant, the chorus is pleasant, and so are some of the tunes. But the show lacks the character it might have acquired by holding to some definite point of view, and it lacks very sadly what it should surely have in the absence of such a point of view—some first-rate clown.

H. H.

Films

Hollywood Tries "Ideas"

IT is difficult not to sympathize with Hollywood. No matter what it does, in what direction it strikes out, it is always faced with the same problem, the problem of choosing between the devil of the theater stage and the deep sea of its own helplessness. Watch it launch its gaily painted filmcraft, a thing of enormous size but of shallow draft, on some daring adventure into the less familiar regions of art. Almost as soon as land is lost from sight, you see the ship's pilot indeed at sea and the ship itself foundering in deep waters. No wonder Hollywood is loath to undertake such adventures. But unless it keeps within a safe distance from the shore, what alternative has it? Obviously, there is only the devil of the theater stage, with his tempting offerings of polished dialogue and greater intellectual subtlety.

To be sure, to accept the stage dialogue is to sin against the inner truth of the movies, for on the stage the dialogue is an artificially inflated thing which does duty, in the conditions of theatrical presentation, for a great deal of human conduct that is essentially wordless. But there is undeniable fascination in the glitter and stimulating impact of well-chosen words, and Hollywood would have been more than human if it had not yielded to the temptation.

Not so with the other offering held out by the stage, its relatively superior intellectual approach to the material of life. Ideas, it so happens, have no important box-office value unless they can be appreciated by the least intelligent. Mindful of this, Hollywood has been chary of adapting stage plays of any marked originality of thought. But times have changed. Even the easily pleased movie public seems to be turning away from the infantile hokum on which it has been fed for so many years. Hollywood has now discovered that it cannot quite do without ideas—ideas sufficiently safe, of course, to stand the test of the box office, but ideas all the same, no matter how slight, provided they can pass for novelty. Evidence of this awakening interest in ideas has been accumulating for some time. At present suffice it to cite a few pictures which are current on Broadway this week.

One of them is "As You Desire Me" (Capitol), which is based on a play of the same name by Pirandello. The reputation of a profound thinker enjoyed by Pirandello has perhaps been too easily won. At least to this writer his profundities never seemed to amount to much more than conscientious, if rather dull and superficial, exercises in intellectual gymnastics. But meet Signor Pirandello on the screen, and by contrast with other screen playwrights he appears almost an intellectual giant. To be sure, his play contains no ideas of striking depth or originality. The problem of a woman assuming the identity of another woman, dismissing her doubts as well as those of her supposed husband in order that she may satisfy his ardent love for his lost wife, is really only a variant of the old dictum that the wish is father to the thought, superimposed on the familiar Pirandellian quandary of whether we are what we and others think we are. But it is an idea after all, and a refreshing one at that, when compared with the endless variations of the love triangle in which the only "idea" is the animal attraction of the sexes. Apart from this consideration, "As You Desire Me" has little to distinguish it from the average product of the Hollywood studios. It is essentially a stage play, with its dialogue bearing the entire burden of dramatic development, and it is acted without much distinction, even by its principal star, Miss Greta Garbo.

And now we may turn to Hollywood's own efforts to supply new ideas. Here is, for instance, "Forgotten Commandments" (Rivoli). Free love in Communist Russia, people worshiping the state instead of God, all moral precepts reversed, "thou shalt covet thy neighbor's wife, thou shalt steal, and thou shalt kill, if it is for the good of the state"—ah, here is something decidedly different, original, new. And so it would be, but for the unimportant fact that it is no more true of Soviet Russia than it is of America, and that, moreover, the picture shows neither Russia nor America, but typical Hollywood, with all its cheap sentiment and lurid sex. As for the other novel idea of the picture—the contrast between the present and the past with the help of some excerpts from Cecil de Mille's "Ten Commandments"—the pasteboard dramatics of this screen ballet are enough to kill any moral it was supposed to suggest.

No more successful in the matter of new ideas is "Two Seconds" (Winter Garden), in which an attempt is made to add novelty to the familiar love triangle by telling the sordid story of a murder as it is supposed to have flashed through the mind of the murderer the moment before he met his death in the electric chair. The device is of course not new. It has been tried on the screen in Paul Fejos's "The Last Moment." But what makes it so pointless in "Two Seconds" is that no sooner is it introduced in the opening sequence than it is completely forgotten in the rest of the picture, for we are shown incidents which could never have been seen by the man supposed to recollect them, and the whole story is told not as it might have flashed through the man's mind, but as it could be seen only by an outside observer. As to the story itself, it is hardly worth telling, so hackneyed are most of its ingredients.

Little consolation, too, can be derived from the latest German film, "Monte Carlo Madness" (Roxy). A deliberate extravaganza in its story, the film seldom rises to its opportunities, showing neither originality of treatment nor any marked sense of dramatic emphasis or contrast.

ALEXANDER BAKSHY

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